

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DUBLIN 00819 181250Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 MCT-01
CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06
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FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9014
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL BELFAST

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS EI
SUBJECT: PROVISIONAL DEMONSTRATION IN DUBLIN

REF: DUBLIN 726

1. A PLANNED "MASSIVE" DEMONSTRATION IN DUBLIN IN SUPPORT OF THE I.R.A. HUNGER STRIKERS ON APRIL 16 TURNED OUT TO BE A RATHER UNIMPRESSIVE EVENT. ONLY ABOUT 2500 SHOWED UP. AT ONE POINT THE POLICE OUTNUMBERED THE DEMONSTRATORS. APPARENTLY ONE REASON FOR THE POOR TURNOUT WAS THE FACT THAT THE IRISH POLICE STOPPED AND DETAINED A CONVOY OF BUSES FULL OF DEMONSTRATORS COMING FROM NORTHERN IRELAND. THE CHIEF SPEAKERS WERE SEAN MACSTIAFAIN, FORMER PROVISIONAL I.R.A CHIEF OF STAFF; DEIRDRE O'CONAIL, WIFE OF IMPRISONED LEADER DAITHI O'CONAIL (ONE OF THE HUNGER STRIKERS); AND SEAMUS COSTELLO, LEADER OF THE IRISH REPUBLICAN SOCIALIST PARTY.

2. MEANWHILE THE HUNGER STRIKERS ARE REACHING THE CRITICAL STAGE IN THE CURRAGH MILITARY HOSPITAL.

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TWO STRIKERS GAVE UP ON APRIL 15, BUT EIGHTEEN REMAIN ON STRIKE AND HAVE NOW REACHED THEIR FORTY-FIRST DAY.

3. ON APRIL 17 JUSTICE MINISTER COONEY ANNOUNCED THAT THERE WOULD BE ABSOLUTELY NO COMPROMISE BY THE GOVERNMENT. HE DENIED THAT CONDITIONS IN PORTLAOISE PRISON WERE INHUMAN AND DEGRADING (THE AIM OF THE STRIKERS IS TO

IMPROVE CONDITIONS IN THE PRISON). HE ALSO SAID THAT THE IRA IS GUILTY OF TELLING LIES ABOUT THE CONDITIONS. HE REFUSED TO ALLOW INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION OF THE PRISON BECAUSE THAT DEMAND CAME FROM THE PROVISIONAL IRA AND ITS FRONT GROUPS. AT BASE, HE INSISTED, IT IS A QUESTION OF WHETHER THE IRISH PEOPLE WILL BELIEVE ITS DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED GOVERNMENT OR THE ASSERTIONS OF THE PROVISIONAL IRA.

4. COMMENT: DESPITE THE ROMATIC, HISTORICAL APPEAL OF HUNGER STRIKING IN IRELAND, IT IS APPARENT THAT THIS STRIKE HAS VERY LITTLE POPULAR SUPPORT AND THE GOVERNMENT IS ON SOLID GROUND FOR HANGING TOUGH. HOWEVER, THE HUNGER STRIKERS ARE ALSO A TOUGH, DEDICATED GROUP AND IF IT GOES ALL THE WAY, WHICH MIGHT OCCUR ANY DAY NOW, THERE COULD BE A SENTIMENTAL BACKLASH OF CONSIDERABLE BENEFIT TO THE PROVISIONAL IRA. WE ARE SLIGHTLY PUZZLED AS TO THE REASON WHY ALL INDEPENDENT OBSERVERS, EVEN MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENT. HAVE BEEN BARRED FROM PORTLAOISE. CURLEY

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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 18-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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